

APPENDIX I: THE SPECIALISATION PROCESS

Students who enter year 1 of the Foundation Degree in Circus Arts (other than those on the juggling strand) undergo a process during the first two terms to determine their circus discipline specialisation. This is a collaborative process between the student and staff, leading to a decision about which circus discipline is suited both physically and psychologically to that person, or persons in the case of group disciplines. Our goal is to help the young circus performer to establish the foundation for a long and fruitful career. We aim for all students in this first year to have completed this process by the end of the Spring Term (March/April), although extensions are possible where necessary.

This process takes the form of an assessed module 'Specialisation Assessments'. The module provides students with the opportunity to research and experience a various range of appropriate circus disciplines. At the end of the module, students will have gained insight and knowledge that will allow them to make a more informed and positive choice of their area of circus specialisation. Students will be challenged to discover new discipline areas as well as re-evaluate any preconceptions they may have in relation to those previously experienced.

Stages of the process:

1. Students are asked to begin researching circus disciplines prior to the start of the course
2. Students submit a specialisation questionnaire giving an indication of their interests half way through the first term
3. Following submission of the questionnaire an interview will take place between the student and Course Managers, where through discussion they will consider which are the most suitable selection of specialisations for that student to consider
4. Students give a short presentation towards the end of the autumn term demonstrating and/or justifying their three specialisation choices, and explaining why they have come to these decisions
5. Following the interview and presentations, the Course Managers will confirm which specialisations the student will be assessed in during the spring term. Students will be able to be assessed in up to three disciplines.
6. During the spring term the student's suitability and potential in these specialisations will be assessed by discipline teachers who will report back to the student's Course Manager. There may also be input from the strength and conditioning teacher or a physiotherapist regarding the student's physical suitability for a particular discipline. These assessments will inform further discussions between the student and their Course Managers. At any stage a student can and should make an appointment to ask their Course Managers for advice and/or inform them of any conclusions they have formed

7. The student's final discipline choice will be made in conjunction with their Course Managers, from a good understanding of the student's physical and psychological strengths and weaknesses as well as their creative motivations, informed by the stages outlined above. The choice of disciplines by students across the year group will also need to be balanced against available resources, and where the number of students who wish to undertake a specific discipline outweighs the resource available, selection will be based on the students who show the greatest potential to reach the required level in that specific discipline in the time available on the programme. The final decision will be reached by the Course Managers in discussion with the student, and with the approval of the Director of Higher Education
8. Students begin working in their selected discipline once it has been signed off by the Course Managers and the Director of Higher Education
9. Students are assessed on their engagement with the specialisation process – please refer to the Specialisation Assessments module guide for further details on assessment criteria